State of Utah GREEN JOBS SURVEY

Nowadays, the word "green" is commonly used to describe how economic activities positively impact the environment. From internal business practices to the global market place, the green label is being applied to economic inputs and outputs alike. But what does being green actually mean? And how is Utah's economy affected by the green movement?

In an effort to answer these questions, Utah's Department of Workforce Services (DWS) partnered with five other states (Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa) to form the Rocky Mountain & Northern Plains Green Job Consortium. The consortium was commissioned by the Federal Department of Labor to research the green economy by geographic area, industry and occupation. To obtain information under those strata, it was determined that each state in the consortium would conduct a green jobs survey within their respective state. In Utah, DWS sampled over 11,000 establishments across 19 major industry sectors.

Prior to launching a survey, however, the consortium needed to construct an appropriate definition for green as it related to jobs and business activities. Was a secretary who put waste paper in a recycle bin a "green secretary"? If a business replaced old light bulbs with more energy efficient ones, was that a "green business"?

It turns out, what we really wanted to measure through a green jobs survey were economic activities that were different because they were green. A secretary's job is the same whether he/she recycles waste or throws it in the garbage, and a bakery is going to engage in baking goods regardless of what type of light bulbs are in use. Conversely, an electrician who knows how to repair a wind turbine might have a very different set of knowledge, skills and abilities than an electrician who wires residential buildings. Moreover, a business that operates to manufacture energy efficient light bulbs is specialized in a green area, whereas almost any business that uses light bulbs can upgrade to energy efficient ones. In short, for the purposes of this study, we defined a green job as one where the employee is directly performing green-related activities as part of their core-job duties. We defined a green business as a firm that primarily operates to produce a green economic product or service. The consortium then needed to classify what constituted a green-related activity. We came up with six green economic categories as shown at the right.

In the end, the Utah green jobs survey witnessed a statistically valid response rate of 47 percent. Over 400 companies reported having at least one green job and over 500 companies reported being engaged in a primary green activity. Some of the most commonly reported green jobs were environmental engineers, building contractors who specialize in green construction and energy managers. The most frequently reported green economic categories were Energy efficiency and conservation, sustainable agriculture and natural resource conservation and pollution, waste, and greenhouse gas management, prevention, and reduction.

Although the Rocky Mountain & Northern Plains Green Jobs Consortium is just beginning to interpret the major findings of the Green Jobs Survey, the research has proved encouraging. We are gaining a better understanding of what "green" means for Utah, its economy and its workforce, and we look forward to be able to report more information as it is uncovered.

The consortium needed to classify what constituted a green-related activity and developed six green economic categories as shown below.

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES
Renewable Energy and Alternative Fuels	Manufacturing, construction, research, or delivery of wind, solar, biomass, hydro, geothermal, methane and waste incineration as a fuel source.
Energy efficiency and conservation	Manufacturing, construction or installation of energy efficient products such as weatherization, retrofitting and transportation technology.
Pollution, waste, and greenhouse gas (GHG) management, prevention, and reduction	Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste water and other pollutants.
Environmental cleanup and restoration, and waste clean-up and mitigation	Clean-up and disposal of waste, hazardous materials and landfill restoration.
Education, regulation, compliance, public awareness, training and energy trading	Activities that educate on energy efficiency, energy rating system certifications, enforcement of compliance requirements and training on effective use of energy related products and processes.
Sustainable agriculture and natural resource conservation	Low carbon and organic agriculture, land management, water management and conservation, wetlands restoration and environmental conservation.